



Mrs. Geraldine Shamma (left) of Boston and Mrs. Martha O'Neal of Orlando, Fla., hold a press conference yesterday at Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., on their arrival from Cuba. With them is Attorney James Donovan, who arranged their release.—AP Wirephoto.

Freed U. S. Women Tell Of Missile Tests in Cuba

MIAMI, Fla., Mar. 18 (AP). —Two American women, only female members of a group of more than 20 Americans in Cuban prisons, were free today and the others were expected to be in their homeland within six weeks.

After their arrival in the United States yesterday the two women claimed that while in prison they heard Russians test-firing missiles.

"I don't think they could be small ones," one woman said. "They shook the prison bars in our hands."

The women were released unexpectedly earlier yesterday, "with no strings attached," according to James Donovan, the New York lawyer who negotiated their freedom.

More Releases Due

Mr. Donovan said the other native-born Americans would be released when delivery of the \$53 million Bay of Pigs prisoner ransom was completed. That should take about six weeks, he said.

Mr. Donovan also said Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro had agreed to free nine Scandinavians, including two Americans, who were arrested six weeks ago at the Bay of Pigs. But they had paid any ransom for me, I wouldn't

them innocent of counter-revolutionary activity.

One of the women, who spent more than two years in Cuban jails, said the Russians are testing missiles at an underground rock quarry six miles from Guanajay Prison, 15 miles from Havana. This is one of the sites where Russians installed intermediate range missiles before last October's Cuban crisis.

Mrs. Geraldine Shamma, a native of Boston, said the test were conducted every three or four days and were powerful enough to shake the bars of the prison.

Mrs. Shamma said prison guards came her friends during the 16-months confinement, told her the missiles are being test-fired in a horizontal shaft leading from the quarry.

Mrs. Shamma said she was instructed not to divulge any information because it might prejudice the Cuban regime against the remaining Cuban prisoners. But she said:

"I hear they don't think I'm going to cooperate all this time, but we've had. It was arrested six weeks ago at the Bay of Pigs. But they had paid any ransom for me, I wouldn't

Became Used to Tests

The other woman, Mrs. Martha O'Neal, whose parents live in Orlando, Fla., wouldn't talk about the missiles. However, at one point she turned around and said, "I heard them so often that I became used to them and didn't even notice the noise."

The women talked with reporters at a Homestead Air Force Base service club, near Miami, after returning on a flight from Havana with Mr. Donovan.

Both looked tired but appeared in good health.

Mrs. Shamma said her husband died in 1950. Mrs. O'Neal is divorced.

They said they had been charged with counter-revolutionary activity and sentenced to 10 years. But neither would be specific about the charges.

Mrs. O'Neal said she was arrested December 15, 1960, at a friend's house. Mrs. Shamma said she was arrested November 1960.

Mr. Donovan negotiated the release of the women. He said he considered only the native-born Americans to be United States citizens.

APR 4 1961
 1006700210008-7
 X Here 2 James B. Donovan
 X Here 2 (Mrs) Geraldine Shamma
 X Here 2 (Mrs) Martha O'Neal
 X Sci 1 Russia

give no details on what basis the Americans were being released. He said it was entirely different from the invasion ransom.

During his four-day stay in Cuba, Mr. Donovan said he visited all the American prisoners. There are about 35 of them, he said, but Premier Castro considers only the native-born Americans to be United States citizens.